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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 17 September 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to my letters 813/5/2002 of 23 July 2002 and 828/5/2002 of 25 July 2002, and in response to the letter dated 5 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to you, I have the honour to make the following points, on instructions from my Government:

1. Israel is occupying the Shab'a farms area of Lebanon, and therefore the acts of legitimate resistance against the Israeli occupation are not being carried out "on the Israeli side of the Blue Line" or across the border in northern Israel, as alleged, but in occupied territory and against Israeli military positions in that territory. Accordingly, the acts of resistance to the Israeli occupation do not fall under Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) on counter-terrorism, which Lebanon is implementing, but under General Assembly resolution 46/51 of 9 December 1991 and other relevant resolutions establishing a distinction between terrorism, which we condemn, and the right of peoples to struggle against foreign occupation.

2. This occupation — supported by Israel's bellicose practices and military actions aimed at provoking and constantly threatening Lebanon, Israel's violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the land, airspace and waters of Lebanon, and Israel's contempt for the resolutions of international organizations on the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region — is what constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security, for which Israel must assume sole responsibility.

* A/57/150.

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3. The Israeli military aircraft referred to in the Israeli letter fly deep into Lebanese territory almost every day, as you have pointed out in your reports to the Security Council, specifically your report on UNIFIL dated 12 July 2002 (S/2002/746), which states that a pattern emerged whereby the aircraft would fly out to sea and enter Lebanese airspace north of the UNIFIL area of operation, thus avoiding direct observation and verification by UNIFIL. If Hizbollah fired at the Israeli aircraft in self-defence as part of the legitimate struggle to liberate the territory, it was only firing at Israeli military aircraft that were violating Lebanese airspace.

4. Lebanon reaffirms its legitimate right to liberate its territory occupied by Israel, and reiterates its commitment to the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace in accordance with the resolutions of international organizations flouted by Israel.

5. Israel is continuing its policy of misinformation in the Middle East, taking advantage of the tragic events of 11 September in order to make the international community believe that it is fighting terrorism in the Middle East, and, in line with its policy of deception, never forgetting to request circulation of the letters addressed to you under the item entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", while ignoring the root cause of the problem in the region, namely the occupation of the Arab territories.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under items 36 and 162, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Houssam **Diab**
Chargé d' affaires a.i.